BACKCOUNTRY MEDIA REVIEW

Parks Canada – Mountain National Parks

March 2009

incorporated. What this review provides is some “from the ground up” recommendations to assist in directing an efficient fit into the new brand.

PRINT MEDIA REVIEW

New Parks Canada Branding

For all print media it will be necessary to consider the new Parks Canada national branding guidelines that are planned for unveiling in the spring of 2009. The new brand will include new photography styles and logo use. A palate of colours and font guidelines may be included. For consistency, and to re-enforce the new brand, these guidelines will need to be followed.

Evaluation Criteria

Print media was evaluated and recommendations given in reference to these criteria. The list was reviewed by the Steering Committee and adjusted to respond to the print media pieces.

1. Target Audience

Generally the audience is the backcountry user. Activity specific or area specific print media are targeted to that particular audience.

2. Purpose/Goals and Categorization

What is the goal of the brochure? Information? Route finding? Pre-trip planning? Counselling? Marketing? Does this brochure fit into a category, e.g. Backcountry Planning Map/Brochure, fact sheet, or newsletter?

3. Consistency

How is this brochure similar or different from other brochures in this category? Are there some consistencies and/or inconsistencies?

Is the size and paper appropriate? Should it fit in a pocket? Is it usable at a VRC counter? Can you write on it? Can this brochure be a template and/or used in other parks? Should this information be added into, or combined, with another brochure? E.g. Fact sheet or web based checklist.


4. Availability:

Is it easy to get the brochure where it is needed? Visitor Reception Centres and park gates? Should it be available at non-Parks Canada locations - a climbing store...
or at the Alpine Club of Canada? Should it be available at other locations within the Park? E.g. Trailhead kiosk? Campsite? Fastened to a picnic table? Is it available on the website? Does it translate well as a website PDF for viewing and for printing?

5. Mandate and Mission Statement Support

Does the brochure support the Parks Canada mandate? Does it encourage “protection, education and visitor experience”?
6. **Hierarchy**

Is the hierarchy of information working – does it guide you through the brochure? Could there be better headlines or ‘pull quotes’ to make it easier to read?

7. **User Friendly Design**

Is it inviting and friendly? Or institutional? Is the information appropriate and easy to understand? Too much? Too little? Is the brochure telling a good story – is there an opportunity here to add a story or other interesting ways to communicate information? E.g. ‘Did you know that . . .’

8. **Charts and Maps**

Is a chart used or is there an opportunity to use a chart to make the information easier to understand? E.g. the Waterton Backcountry brochure/map has a camping chart on the back. If a map is used is there too much detail, or too little detail? Should there be contours or shading to make it easier to understand? Are seasonal closures, group size, or other requirements indicated? E.g. Waterton map.

If there are graphics, icons, or drawings used, are they appropriate? Can they be improved? Can more international symbols, icons, or drawings be used to make it easier to understand to non-English speaking visitors? E.g. could a cartoon be used?

9. **Photos**

Are the photos amazing and appropriate? Are there enough photos to help make the information readable?

10. **Links, Resources and Important Information**

For activity brochures - if the user needs further reference materials for the activity - does the brochure recommend sources for this information? E.g. Trail report, Gem Trek map, or to the Friends of Banff website. Is a checklist needed? Are all the appropriate safety messages and regulations there? Pass/Fee information? Trail Report? Leave No Trace message/wilderness care? Are there repeated messages?

11. **Publication Date**

Does the brochure show a publication date or versioning, and if not should it? Should some trailhead kiosk notices be dated?

12. **Green**

Is it green? How can it be greener? Does it say how it is green?

13. **User Feedback**

Are there ways for the user to provide feedback? E.g. web based backcountry survey, a feedback form included within the brochure, or onsite cameras.

These parks are truly amazing places – and a picture speaks a thousand words.
Well Designed Samples

- **A Climbers Guide to Mt. Rundle and Cascade Mountain, Banff National Park**

Simple pocket sized brochure with a photo for route finding. These climbs are common accident areas and require special communication consideration, even though the brochure quantity required is low.

- **Hiking the Hump brochure – Waterton National Park.**

Outstanding professional artwork gives value to the brochure. There is no consistency with any other media.
• Bears and People Brochure

Overall this is an effective brochure covering equally how to travel safely in bear country and bear conservation. The cover photo with the timed photo is very effective. The copy is a bit long to read, although there is good hierarchy that guides the reader easily through the brochure.

This is an important brochure to keep up-to-date with new research about both safety and conservation. The information in the Mountain Guide about bear attacks is different. Information from each brochure should be consistent. There is some brand consistency with the look of the Mountain Guide.
**Recommendation:**

- Parks should use more professional artwork. Suggest incorporating the artwork into a common template layout and design.
Additional Brochures Recommended

Mountain Biking

- With the trend to increasing bike use, there is a need for biking trail information in each Park and specific to that park. At present Banff is the only Park that has a specific biking brochure. Jasper is also a mountain bike destination and should have a specific brochure. Other parks should consider, at a minimum, a fact sheet for cycling and mountain biking.

Snowshoeing

- With the trend to increasing snowshoeing use, there is a need for this information in each Park. Whether coordinated with other Parks or individually created, each Park should have a snowshoeing as either a brochure or a fact sheet.

Brochures Recommended Discontinued

Horse Use

- This brochure is used infrequently, and should be converted to a fact sheet that can be printed in smaller quantities.

Activity Brochure Mock-Up

Attached is a sample mock-up of an activity brochure, “Mountain Biking and Road Biking in Banff National Park”, The sample illustrates the recommended design direction.
• The content in this brochure mock up is only 70% accurate and is for design direction only.

• The panel size is 1/4 the size of a standard 8.5” x11” sheet of paper. This should allow for easier conversion to a printable PDF.

• The colours used are similar to the Mountain Guide for brand consistency.

• The font used is different than the font currently used by Parks Canada. The font family used is Myriad Pro, and is readable in small sizes and on colour backgrounds in white.
Fact Sheets

Facts do not cease to exist because they are ignored.
- Aldous Huxley

Fact Sheets Reviewed

The format for all fact sheets (single or multi page sheets) 21.5cmx28cm (8 ½”x11”)

- Canoeing Guide - Lake Louise to Castle Junction
- Canoeing the Bow River
- Cross Country Skiing in the Lake Louise Area
- Cross Country Skiing in the Lake Louise Area
- Snowshoeing: Trail Descriptions – Banff National Park
- Making Tracks: Skiing and Boarding in Banff’s Backcountry
- Bryant Creek Shelter
- Backcountry Random Camping – Jasper National Park
- JNP Bivouacking Guidelines – Jasper National Park
- Ski Trails – Jasper National Park – new design in progress (not evaluated)
- Skiing and Snowshoeing in Kootenay National Park
- Trails suitable for cross country skiing in Kootenay National Park
- Horse Use Guidelines: Waterton Lakes National Park
- Winter Activities Waterton National Park
- Glacier National Park Hiking Guide
- The Mistaya River
- Beaver Summit Lake Trail
- Athabasca Falls/Moab Lake/Meeting of the Waters Area
- Wabasso Campground ski trails
- Radium Hot Springs Area Trails
• Lake O’Hara 2009
**Target Audience**

The Park visitor looking for activity or location specific information.

**Goals and Purpose**

Fact sheets provide specific information to visitors.

**Consistency**

There are over 20 various designs of fact sheets. None are the same. Fact sheets vary in paper colour, print colour, design, font usage, paper size, layout, and orientation.

**Printing, Templates and Cost Effectiveness**

Fact sheets are generally printed in small quantities in-house or photocopied onto standard 8.5”x11” paper, usually white.

Fact sheets were often designed and printed in house, by individual Park staff. The information was consistently accurate and useful to the public. Occasionally these fact sheets were poorly photocopied portraying an unprofessional image. Mapping and artwork were usually adequate, but not professional or exceptional.

**Availability**

Most are available at Visitor Reception Centres. Some of the fact sheets are available also over the web, but not all.

**Recommendations:**

- Consistent branding is required.

- Branded templates should be designed and made available to staff in an online library or binder with a CD of templates. One page, two page double sided, and multi-page templates should be designed.

- When over 200 brochures are required, professional printing is more cost and time efficient. Time saved on photocopying is better spent on creative projects that make use of staff knowledge and skills.

- Double-sided versions are a green approach to be encouraged.
Trailhead Review

Eleven varying trailhead kiosk designs exist in the seven Mountain Parks at present. Posters, signs, notices, warnings, and partner information vary greatly. The information posted is often unprofessional in design, repetitious and outdated.

**Kootenay, Yoho, Banff Park** kiosks have some consistent permanent panel designs. Notices and warnings were often difficult to read and poorly displayed. Outside of the KYLL Field Unit, panel design and layout is inconsistent. Kiosks vary greatly in design and finish. Plexi-glass covers limit readability. Trailheads requiring overall site layout and design attention include Lake O’Hara, Lake Louise, and Emerald Lake.

**Waterton Park** kiosk designs were consistent at each trailhead. The trail description and safety message is text heavy. There is no space or method for posting notices or warnings in this design. The kiosk condition was generally good, with some deteriorating maps. Easy to read user symbols are colour coordinated, although not Park standard. The Cameron Lake Ski Trail area trailhead would benefit from redesign to ensure safe use of the trailhead and parking area.

**Glacier and Mt. Revelstoke Park** trailhead kiosk structures are similar in design to the new standard. The kiosk structures are in good condition and can accommodate new panels. Existing sign panels are outdated and often in poor condition.

**Jasper Park** trailhead kiosks are being replaced with the new standard designs. Pre-replacement designs and posted information are dated, with inconsistencies and repetition. Prominent trailheads needing site layout and design attention are the Skyline Trail, Bald Mountain Trail, Parker Ridge, Mt. Edith Cavell (not visited), Pyramid Lake area trails.

*Waterton NP standard trailhead kiosk with attached warning board.*
Standard Kiosk Design

A standard kiosk design is approved and available in the Trail and Back Country Facility Design Guidelines, 2008. Several kiosks of this design have been installed in Jasper National Park. With this standard design confirmed, layout and design of panels will be the next step in ensuring consistency within all parks. Some variations exist in this standard design. These variations need to be noted prior to construction of the kiosks, and the fabrication of panels. Variations from section 3.6 of the Guidelines and general design considerations are noted here:

• **Location** - New kiosk structures are to be placed in appropriate locations for maximum stopping power. Assess trailhead design and layout of other trailhead facilities, signs and structures.

• **Kiosk Finish** – The kiosk stain is specified as Banff Green. The newly constructed kiosk finish is a natural clear stain.

A natural clear stain finish is recommended. The finish should mimic the existing Mt. Revelstoke/Glacier Park kiosks, and the newly installed Jasper kiosks.

• **Panel Layout** – Three panels are specified in the Guidelines. Both single panel and double panel designs have been constructed in Jasper. A double panel design is recommended in the review: One larger permanent panel, and one smaller locked panel for non-permanent notices and warnings.

• **Panel Size** – Specified dimensions and as built dimensions vary. This variation is an unacceptable flaw. Specifications will need to be reviewed and adjusted. All kiosks are to be identical in size to allow for consistent panels to be fabricated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sign kiosk specifications</th>
<th>Size of space</th>
<th>Maximum panel size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specified panel size</td>
<td>42&quot;x78.5&quot;</td>
<td>35&quot;x74.5&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As built panel size</td>
<td>35&quot;x74&quot;</td>
<td>To be designed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• **Panel Materials** – Plexi-glass cover is recommended for the non-permanent panel only. The permanent panel is to be fabricated from a durable weather resistant material such as 1- zone.

• **Fasteners** – Permanent panels should be fastened with tamper proof screws of appropriate and consistent standard. A standard tack design should be used to fasten non-permanent information. Kiosk structure plates and bolts need to have the same finish and design.
Standard trailhead sign kiosk design - installation in Jasper Park initiated in 2009

Preliminary draft of Parks Canada trailhead sign kiosk panel
Trailhead Area Layout and Design

- **Structure and sign locations** – Layout and design is important to the first impression visitor’s encounter when they arrive at a trailhead. Placement of toilets, signs and parking should be considered in trailhead design.

Internationally significant sites need site layout and design that will help celebrate these prominent places (e.g. Lake Louise, Emerald Lake, Maligne Lake area, Lake O’Hara). These signature locations will require professional landscape designs.

The design of all trailheads, especially those with high use and international significance should be of a naturalized, non industrial style. Design guidelines for trailheads should minimize alteration to the existing landscape, and work with the native vegetation, materials and character of the area.

- **Sign farming** – Limit sign installation at trail head locations. Other signage in addition to the trailhead kiosk is generally not required and should be removed. E.g. directional sign post, user symbols, park management goals. This information, if important, can be designed into the permanent panel of the kiosk.

Consistency and Templating

Posting consistent easily read, well designed messaging will allow the reader to identify their priorities and get the information they need. Several designs of posters, sign panels, symbols and maps are posted on trail head kiosks throughout the Mountain National Parks. They are inconsistent, often outdated, and poorly presented. Design guidelines and templates for trailhead kiosk sign messages will provide a consistent quality product.

*Mountain National Parks*

- **Existing standard panel designs can be improved** – discontinue use of plexi-glass and cork backing for permanent panels, use standard symbols, all park consistency important.

- **Warnings and legal notices are not consistent**, are inadequately mounted, and occasionally illegible.

Sign Panel Inclusions and Exclusions

- **Inclusions** – sign kiosk messages: Map, trail description, user symbols, safety message, notices, possible brief custom message.

- **Maps** – Gemtrek or other 3D simple depiction.

- **Trail Description** – with distance, elevation gain, short description, an amazing photo of the destination.

- **User symbols** – common size, colour, style, material, fasteners.

- **Safety message** – Include ‘be responsible for your own safety’ type poster, emergency contact information (Jasper example is consistent but lacks stopping power).

- **Notices** – Standard for all parks: dated and updated regularly. Templates should be developed for three purposes:
**Information** = green (e.g. Mountain Cariboo management, fish stocking, trail grooming)

**Caution** = yellow (e.g. fallen trees over trail due to past forest fires in the area)

**Closure** = red (e.g. trail closed due to bear activity).

- **Custom Message** – Space allotted for specific park/trail information. This additional signage should be permanently mounted and follow the same design motif of the templated trail description in the permanent panel. The sign panel designer should watch for repetition of information on standard panels.

- **Avalanche information** – completed. Not evaluated in this exercise.

- **Hierarchy and Quantity of Information**

  "LESS – LESS - LESS"

  - Limited space on new standard sign kiosk design will require the exclusion of some of the material now posted on the kiosks.
  - Use symbols where possible (Share the Trail, No dogs, Horse use, Friends symbol).
  - Ensure there is no repeated information.

- **Exclusions**

  Consider excluding this type of information from the trailhead signage:

  - Park management issues
  - Interpretive stories.
  - Conservation messages
  - Volunteer group posters
  - Non-permanent information.
Sample Sign Layout – Trailhead Kiosk

Permanent panel

- Located on the left hand side of the kiosk
- Includes: Trail description, symbols, map, safety message, photos, possible custom message
- Excludes: Interpretive messages, notices, warnings
- Does not have plexi-glass cover

Non permanent panel

- Located on the right hand side of the kiosk
- Uses ‘ATTENTION!’ as a bilingual heading
- Includes: legal notices, warnings
- Is colour coded (e.g. red=closures, yellow=warning)
- Has a plexi-glass lockable cover
Approach to Media Suite

This chart summarizes the media suite recommendations. It depicts how the visitor can obtain backcountry information through several different points of contact. Also note how the website can be used at every level (excluding the trailhead kiosk). One on one counselling is excluded in this chart.